When we stop playing, we all lose
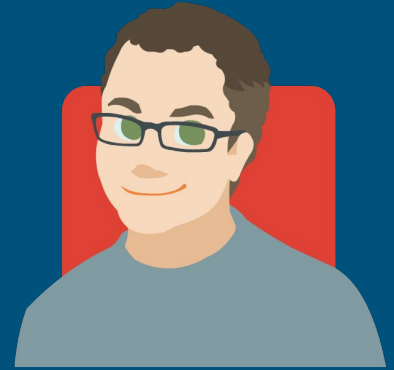
A course in FLO: Practical ways to create fun, challenging learning in your classroom

Zack Gilbert
5th/6th Grade
Thomas Metcalf School
Illinois State University
@EdGamer

Alike short film

Alike short film

Thoughts?

Alike short film

We each have a different path for learning and education shouldn't force you to take the same car on the same road.

Alike short film

This does make our jobs, as educators more difficult.

Technology has the ability to assist with individual learning pathways.

Driving Question

How can I provide fun, engaging, and challenging activities for my students so that they learn with and from each other?

Objectives

- F - Fun
  - Get to know your students and what they find enjoyable and meaningful.
- L - Learning
  - Design learning activities for your students that are authentic and personal.
- O - Others
  - Provide your students with the ability to learn from and with others.

F is for Fun

- **What is fun for you?**
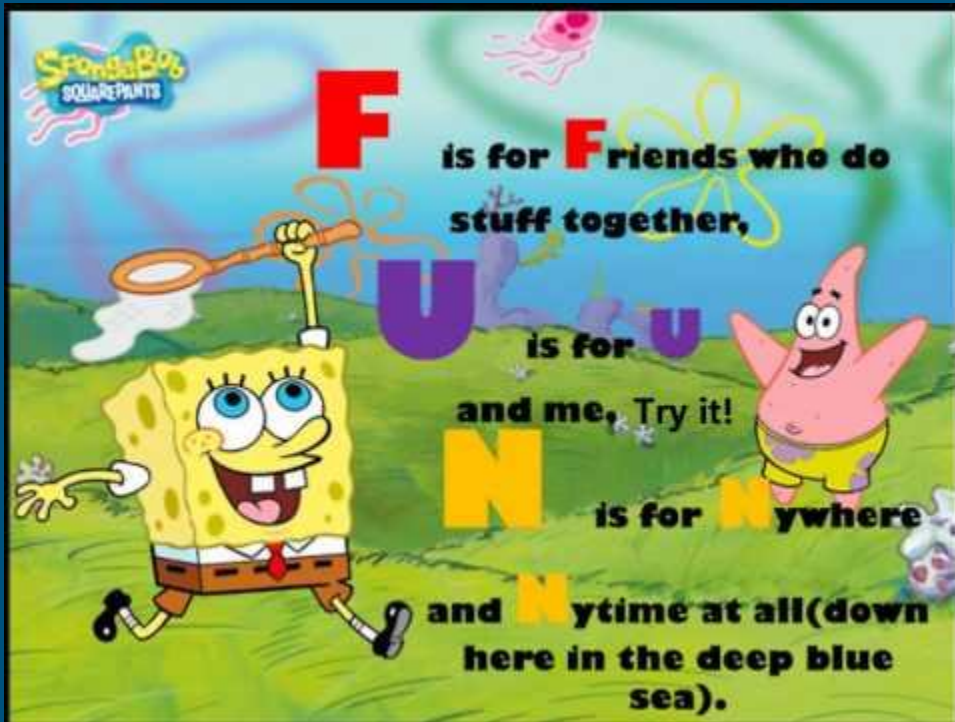- What is fun for your students? (and how do you find out)

What is fun for me?

What is fun for you?
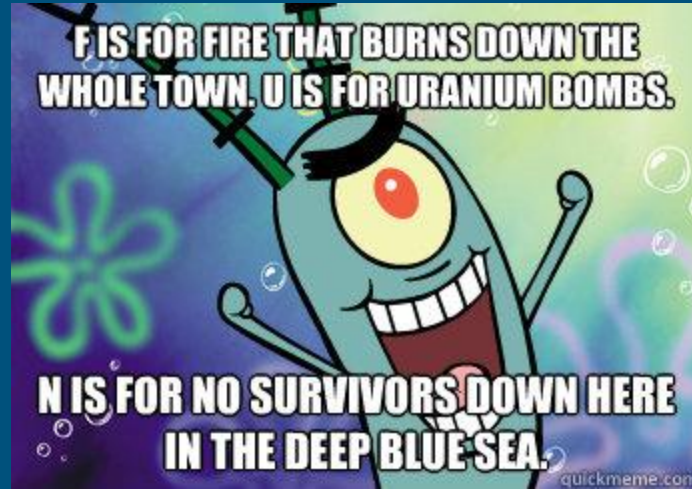
FUN

FUN

Having fun is different for….

Student

Teacher

Administrator

Fun/enjoyment is individual

APA Article - Positive Feelings

Gaming may be among the most efficient and effective means by which children and youth generate positive feelings. Several studies have shown a causal relation between playing preferred video games and improved mood or increases in positive emotion (e.g., Russoniello, O'Brien, & Parks, 2009; Ryan, Rigby, & Przybylski, 2006).

http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/amp-a0034857.pdf

Mindshift Research - Cognitive Gains

"when digital games were compared to other instruction conditions without digital games, there was a moderate to strong effect in favor of digital games in terms of broad cognitive competencies."

"For a student sitting in the median who doesn't have a game, his or her learning achievement would have increased by 12 percent if he or she had that game,"

https://a.s.kqed.net/pdf/news/MindShift-GuidetoDigitalGamesandLearning.pdf

Mindshift Research - Playful Learning

"The promise of game-based learning lies in the premise that the technology provides an efficient and effective tool with which to replace a points-based extrinsic motivation system with a contextualized hands-on learning experience."

https://a.s.kqed.net/pdf/news/MindShift-GuidetoDigitalGamesandLearning.pdf

Mindshift Research - Play is realistc

"Play is useful because it simulates real life experience—physical, emotional, and/or intellectual—in a safe, iterative and social environment that's not focused on winners and losers."

https://a.s.kqed.net/pdf/news/MindShift-GuidetoDigitalGamesandLearning.pdf

Why is having fun important?

From the Playful Learning Website-

"What if, instead of seeing school the way we've known it, we saw it for what our children dreamed it might be: a big, delicious video game?"— The New York Times

F is for Fun

- What is fun for you?

- What is fun for your students? (and how do you find out)

What is fun for your students?

1. Why haven't we cared about this before?

2. Why is knowing what is fun for your students important?

3. How do you gather this information?

Survey your students?

What tools can we use to survey our students?

- Google Forms (Alice Keeler)
- Survey Monkey
- Paper survey
- Any others?

Sample fun questions

1. What do you like to do in your free time?
2. What subjects do you love and hate most in school? Why?
3. Describe your favorite teacher. What types of things did you do in that class?
4. If school could be about any one thing, and it would be my job to design all the subjects around that one thing, what would you want it to be and why?
5. What are your greatest talents; what are you especially good at? What makes you good at that?
6. What was the best thing you did in school last year? What makes you pick that out?
7. Is there a better way to find out what you find fun?

L is for Learning

- A connection needs to be made to the learning (Why do I need to learn this info?)
- Learning has to have meaning
- A connection through enjoyment or emotion or both

Learning

Learning can't be too hard or too easy.....

- [FLOW](#)
  - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Ph.D., psychologist and author of the book, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*
- Growth Mindset
- Individual to each student and games can change level of difficulty

Learning questions

Learning targets

- Teacher or district mandated?
- Based on the whole class or individually?
- What is best for the learner?
- [The myth of the average student](#)

Learning - Relevance based upon content

Research-

- [Science Shows Making Lessons Relevant Really Matters](#) - Edutopia
- [Benefits of Gaming: What Research Shows](#) - MindShift
  - "But it's a little disingenuous to say that games are "good for kids." Games are not like vegetables. Don't imagine them as if they were packed with vitamins and nutrients that help kids grow into healthy adults. Like all forms of media, it depends on the particular games and how they are used."

Learning

Learning Principles

- James Paul Gee - *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy*

O is for Others

Provide your students with the ability to learn from and with others.

Others - what is needed

- Collaborating with others
- Building positive relationships
- Building groups/communities within the classroom and school
- Real-world connection
- Group creation and challenges

Others - what is needed

- A safe learning environment
- Learn to listen and be respectful
- Teacher needs to model this behavior
  - My style is open and personal

Others - teamwork examples

What are examples of good teamwork?

Others - teamwork examples

- Einstein (Theory of relativity proven with solar eclipse)
- J.R.R Tolkien (Inklings)
- J.K. Rowling (Team of editors)
- John Wooden ("The main ingredient of stardom is the rest of the team.")

Others - research

[Powerful Learning: Studies Show Deep Understanding Derives from Collaborative Methods](#) - Edutopia

Research shows that teams outperform individuals

[Research Supports Collaborative Learning](#) - Edutopia

Others - research

Teaching students how to work together

- [Using Collaborative Reasoning to Support Critical Thinking](#)
- [Sample Collaborative Reasoning Participation Guidelines and Conversational Moves](#)

Others - teamwork tools

Cooperative games-

- Pandemic
- Forbidden Island
- Castle Panic
- Shadows over Camelot
- Space Team (Digital)
- Other games?

Others - reflection

Reflection is needed to understand-

- What activities were fun/enjoyable
- Comprehension of learning targets
- How the students have helped and learned from others
  - Recognition of helping others is difficult for students

Fun - reflection

Fun-

- What did you enjoy about the lesson or unit?
- What was fun about the lesson?
- What was not fun about the lesson?

Learning - reflection

Questions for reflection-

Learn-

- What were the learning targets?
- What learning targets have personal meaning to you?
- Did you have any personal connection to the lesson?
- What will you remember about this lesson in 20 years?
- Were the standards/learning targets important to you?

Others - reflection

Others-

- What did you learn from other people in the class concerning this lesson?
- Did you learn anything important from your peers? If so, what specifically?
- How did you help others with this lesson?
- Do you feel you contributed to the group in this lesson?

Zack Gilbert
5th/6th Grade
Thomas Metcalf School
Illinois State University
@EdGamer